



DECEMBER 2009 EDITION

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WWW.HUMAN.SALINA.ORG

# Salina Human Relations

“... with liberty and justice for all.”

THE MISSION OF THE SALINA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND TO ESTABLISH EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL PERSONS WITHIN THE CITY OF SALINA THROUGH CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT, ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.

## Perception often isn't reality, students learn

An invitation from Lakewood Middle School social studies teacher Brandon Cheeks last month provided Salina Human Relations with an opportunity to engage about 170 students in conversation.

Human Relations was one of several city departments who sent representatives to talk about their jobs and the type of work they do.

Outreach Specialist Darrin Stineman gave presentations to five seventh-grade classes which included information about diversity awareness, fair housing and the 2010 census.

The groups started out by doing an exercise using the “Herman Grid,” which consists of rows of black rectangles. If you look closely, gray circles seem to appear in-between the rectangles, and the students were asked what their first impression was of the paper in front of them. Many replied that they saw black rectangles and gray circles, and when it was revealed to them that the dots were just an illusion, it was pointed out that this was an example of how many times we see things that don't exist — especially with people.



**ABOUT 170 MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS** took part in exercises and discussion about diversity, fair housing and the 2010 census during Salina Human Relations Department presentations Nov. 13 at Lakewood Middle School.

The students were asked if they had ever had a wrong first impression about someone who had a different background or came from a different culture — or if someone had ever had a wrong first impression of them. Several students shared about their experiences, which led us into good discussion about the importance of inclusiveness and acceptance of people who are different from us.

The groups also did a couple of exercises to help them to be aware of their rights with regard to fair housing.

One of them was to work with members of their group to come up with creative phrases using the first letter of each of the protected classes under the Fair Housing Act: **R**ace, **C**olor, **N**ational Origin, **G**ender, **R**eligion, **D**isability and **F**amilial Status.

One of the entries was:

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“Ronald Can Rent Dirty Nut-Flavored Gum.” Another was: “Rats Can Never Greet Really Dumb Flies.”

The students voted on the best phrases, and the winners received prizes.

Darrin also explained about his role on the We Count steering committee — which is working to help ensure an accurate census count in Salina — and about the importance of participating in the census.

He pointed out that Salina's official count in the 2000 census was about 46,000, and that if Salina can get a count of 50,000 or more in 2010, there would be several benefits.

He explained that, for example, many national retail and restaurant chains require a minimum of 50,000 people in the cities where they locate.

Salina Human Relations would like to thank Mr. Cheeks for inviting us to visit his classroom.

# When it comes to airing views, hate is always out of place

**By Sandy Beverly**

Equal Opportunity Specialist  
Salina Human Relations

Everyone has something they like and dislike. That's human nature.

It is human nature to have an opinion that is the same and/or different from another person. It is human nature to express that opinion in various forms, and in this country we have the luxury of being able to freely express that opinion. What we also



**Sandy Beverly**

have in this country is a little/ really big something called "civil rights."

On Nov. 23, our community was tested. Our right to free speech and civil discourse was challenged by others who believe they have the right to spread hate, call people names, and make assumptions about "others" they do not

agree with. While it is true they have the right to demonstrate, it is also my right to ignore the message they are attempting to spread.

On Nov. 23, K-State at Salina offered an opportunity for the public to attend a lecture, discussion, and learning experience from a transgender person. This event took place on a university campus, you know, a place where you are supposed to think, challenge, learn, question, and discuss EVERYTHING possible and impossible. While I may not agree with or understand the issue of transgender, I recognize the "civil" right of the person doing the presentation to engage in this activity. A university campus is exactly where this type of discussion belongs. If you don't want to hear what the person has to say, don't go.

We have lost the ability to have a civil discussion in this country. All too often, there is yelling, screaming and name

calling and not a true exchange of ideas. There are some people in this world who hate everything, and regardless of what is said or presented, they will not tolerate, listen or accept anything that is not in their belief system. Just because I don't agree with you does not mean I have to hate you or hide behind some idea that somehow I am better than you.

In situations like the one Salina faced on Nov. 23, I will seek grace as opposed to hatred. I will seek compassion as opposed to hatred. I will seek love as opposed to hatred. I will seek understanding as opposed to hatred. I will reach out my hand, open my heart, and engage my mind to accept another human that I may not ever understand, but I recognize as having the right to be.

I hope others will join by not engaging those spreading a message of hate but by supporting the mission of civil rights for all people.

## Volunteers needed!

As part of the Leadership Salina program, some of my classmates and I had the opportunity to visit many Salina area businesses and activities.

One of the outstanding programs we visited was Salina Adult Day Services, 401 W. Iron. They are a wonderful organization that provides day services for adults with a wide range of disabling conditions. One of the things that I heard and saw is that they focus on people's strengths, not limitations, and they have fun!

Sunflower is looking for volunteers to assist with or to provide various activities, including but not limited to arts, crafts, music, gardening, cooking and sewing.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call Mary Sue Wells at (785) 823-6666.

— **Gina McDonald, Director**  
Salina Human Relations

## Won't you be our neighbor?

Do you know who your neighbors are? Do you like helping others in need on your block? Do you like getting to know people who live around you?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we need your help.

The Salina "We Count" committee is looking for more than 200 volunteers to help with neighborhood outreach and communication in preparation for the 2010 census in Saline County.

If you are interested in being part of this volunteer effort, contact Nancy Klostermeyer by e-mail at The Volunteer Connection at [exec@nckvc.org](mailto:exec@nckvc.org) or by phone at 823-3128.



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

### Kickoff event Dec. 7

You can learn more about the importance of the 2010 census for Salina and about how you can get involved to help make it a success by attending the 2010 Census Kickoff Event at 11:45 a.m. Dec. 7 at the Bicentennial Center.

Lunch is provided as a community service of the Salina Noon Rotary and the We Count census committee.

## Calendar of Community Events

**Dec. 3:** NovelNotes featuring Kansas Wesleyan Piano Trio and artist reception for Kathleen League, 5-7 p.m., Salina Public Library.

**Dec. 3:** Order from Papa John's Pizza and 20 percent of the purchase price will be donated to the American Red Cross.

**Dec. 7:** 2010 Census Kickoff Event, 11:45 a.m., Bicentennial Center, educational presentation on the local census effort, lunch is provided.

**Dec. 7:** Cookies and Stories, 4 p.m., Salina Public Library, registration required.

**Dec. 8:** Reference USA class, 11:15 a.m.-noon, Salina Public Library Tech Center.

**Dec. 8:** Cookies and Stories, 6:30 p.m., Salina Public Library, registration required.

**Dec. 8:** Salina Human Relations Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., Bicentennial Center, VIP Room, public is invited.

**Dec. 8:** "Healthy Lifestyles" presented by Dr. Ted Daugherty of the Salina Sleep Lab, free lunch at 11:30, programs at noon and 7 p.m., University United Methodist Church, Santa Fe & Claflin. To make lunch reservations, call 827-3304 or e-mail [emmx@cox.net](mailto:emmx@cox.net).

**Dec. 9:** Printing Census Records for Free, 3-3:45 p.m., Salina Public Library Tech Center.

**Dec. 9:** "It's a Wonderful Life" benefitting the Saint Francis "Christmas for Kids" program, 7 p.m., Salina Community Theatre, 303 E. Iron, tickets \$30, call 1-800-498-4896, ext. 352.

**Dec. 9:** Cookies and Stories, 10 a.m., Salina Public Library, registration required.

**Dec. 10:** Cookies and Stories, 6:30 p.m., Salina Public Library, registration required.

**Dec. 11:** Cookies and Stories, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Salina Public Library, registration required.

**Dec. 15:** Deadline for letters to be mailed to Santa at Salina Public Library, include a return envelope and Santa will respond.

**Dec. 20:** NAACP-Salina monthly meeting, 3 p.m., Salina Art Center, 242 S. Santa Fe, public is invited.

**Dec. 21, 22, 23:** Water Safety Instructor classes at the American Red Cross, 145 S. Broadway, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Cost: \$170. To enroll, call 827-3644.

**Dec. 28, 29, 30, 31:** Waterpark Lifeguarding training, noon-7 p.m. on Dec. 28, 8 a.m.-7 p.m. on Dec. 29-30 and 8 a.m.-1 p.m. on Dec. 31. Cost: \$160. To enroll, call 827-3644 or e-mail [kendrickc@usa.redcross.org](mailto:kendrickc@usa.redcross.org)  
**Feb. 6:** Salina NAACP 2010 Annual Freedom Fund Banquet at the Bicentennial Center; reception, autographs and pictures 4:30-6:15 p.m., program 6:30 p.m. Keynote speaker will be Petri Hawkins Byrd of the "Judge Judy" TV show. Tickets are \$35, and proceeds benefit the NAACP youth scholarship program, the teen youth summit and the fulfillment of the NAACP mission in the Salina community.

Visit our online calendar at  
[www.human.salina.org](http://www.human.salina.org)